TL 6011

The Indonesian oposition and the issue East-Timor

Except for the last two years, the issue East-Timor has always been a taboo for the Indonesian oposition. The planning for the invasion into East-Timor long before 1975, the invasion itself, the war against the people of East-Timor and the maintenance of the presence of the Indonesian army in the territory, the "export" of the Indonesian bureaucracy into the present provincial government in East-Timor, have always been planned and decided through "security" approaches by the military intelligence, regionally and at the center (Jakarta).

Although the Indonesian bureaucracy as a whole is moving slowly to develop independently from the military bureaucracy, East-Timor has always been an exception. It is a military "project" and it started since the war campaign in 1975, until the present periods of forced and uniterally "integration" campaign (the so-called infra-structural development projects, transmigration,education, health care, etc.).

The Indonesian bureaucracy

The degree of frustration for the Indonesian bureacracy in matters of East-Timor may be evenly strong as for the bureaucracy lead by the present "puppet" governor of Carrascalao. There are nothing worse for an Indonesian civil-servant than to be sent to East-Timor. The only information they had before leaving to East-Timor, were: there has been a "bloody" war going on with a strong and heroic resistance from the local population, a great but "unknown" number of deaths on the part of Indonesian soldiers, "problems" between the local government and the military-command and, the province's management is run "de facto" by the army, socially, politically and economically. This last information is the most unpleasant for them, since the "opportunities" to earn money through "businesses" while serving in the province, may be less in other regions. Not to say the degree of "independency" in work circumstances, which will be curbed extra vigourosly by the military bureaucracy than in other regions of the country.

At the top-national level of the bureaucracy, centred at Jakarta, East-Timor has always been a proof of the impotence on the part of the non-military bureaucracy (i.e the state/governmental agencies) to take an critical, active, let say to have an independent stance. East-Timor is the extreme proof or mirror of the state-structure in Indonesia. As for East-Timor, the military is "governing", is anticipating all political steps and taking the decisions, before it will be carried out obediently by the state departments. East-Timor is for the Indonesian bureaucracy a "state-

matter", it means it is a "military-matter", and no non-military representant in the bureaucracy has the competence to interfere or to play a significant role. What tells, is the policy which is discussed and planned among the Ministery of Defense, the headquarter of the Armed Forces and occasionally with the State-Secretary office, next-door to the President's office. The implementation of this policy is carried out by the same agencies and extended minorly to other departments such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Transmigration, etc.

The facts that some East-Timorese are jailed for years at Jakarta or nearby prisons, without being uncovered to the domestic (through the media) or international public, is a proof that the military (respectively the intelligence-agencies: Bakin and Bais) has the full grip on this issue.

An exception, may be the role of the Indonesian Foreign Office, in general taking form in a seemingly active and independent performances of it's foreign minsters or ambassador sent abroad. In cases of critics launched abroad on issues of human rights violations in East-Timor, in the international press or at diplomatic level, it can be seen that the foreign minister's office in Jakarta from time to time takes an unusual offensive and vocal stance than the denials upon other general issues of human rights violations occuring in other regions in Indonesia. Although the Indonesian Foreign Office had been the state agency equipped with "professional" diplomats armed with international experiences, it can still be assumed that there is an intensive day-to-day "briefings" by the office and the Ministery of Defense and the Armed Forces headquarter.

The Indonesian opposition

The basic problem for the Indonesian opposition to raise issues on East-Timor, since the beginning (1975), especially among the jounger generation, had been the difficulties to get actual and adequate information as quick and regular as possible.

In general, the Indonesian opposition can be divided into three categories:

1. (within) the 1945 generation, such as the "Petition 50":

   This group consists of retired generals of the early-hours of the "Orde Baru" and some former top national bureaucrats, serving in the previous government of Sukarno.

   The group claims to be merely a "moral-force" within the existing Indonesian social, economical and political affairs of the "Orde Baru" and it denounced to be against the propagation of a "confrontative" politics toward the existing

power-holders. Since the group consists of retired generals and former "buraucrats", with no significant political concept and the understanding of overall human rights principles (such as the right to self-determination), it is unable to generate discussion within their own groups on East-Timor issues. The last known statement by this group was in 1988, and openly spoken by its "speaker", (ret.) Luit.Gen. Ali Sadikin, had been only to raise their concerns on the great number of deaths on the side of the Indonesian soldiers, which had been kept secret to the public.

2.

The 1966 generation, consisting of former student activists who were also responsible for the overthrow of Sukarno (Indonesia's first President) and who supported the rise of the "Orde-Baru" generals to power. Most of their leaders had soon joined the top)level of the Government echelons or the bureaucracy, with few others still playing the role of "dissidents", but choosing not to raise the East-Timor issue openly. Critics from the younger generation of students and human rights activists to this groups, had been that they had been "bought" off by the Suharto regime or do not dare to raise and work, even on the gravest issues of human rights violations in general.

There is a little exception to this generation though, since it had been known, that some segments had chosen to work within "humanitarian" non-governmental organisations, although covertly, in defending human rights matters, including the East-Timorese prisoners.

3. The "new-generation":

It consists of students and activists from the late 70'ies and 80'ies, who formed and joined the human-rights movements in the late 80'ies.
Some years after the invasion to East-Timor, at the end of1978, the student movements had to endure years of hardships, resulting from the "crack-down" by the military on campus politics. Political activities had been curbed effectively until late 1988, wherein during these ten years of "vacuum"issues of East-Timor had been discussed only within closed doors among the mushrooming students study-groups in Indonesia.

Although East-Timor has been an issue of concerns for critical students, the discussions remained discussions and did not develop into other forms of significant activities. The "vacuum" in student politics ended only when the students of the ITB in Bandung (West-Java) demonstrated against the visit of the minister of Home Affairs, the (ret.) general Rudini to their campus in September 1988. Six of the twelve students who were arrested, were brought into trial. One of

the students, Ammarsyah, in his 250 pages defense plea, also criticize the government for the attrocities against the East-Timor people, mentioning the systemation of the approx. 200.000 killing during the invasion. It was then, the first time in the history of the Indonesian students movement, which detailed and documented the atrocities orchestered by the Indonesian military, openly. His defense plea, together with the others had been printed and reprinted with the a total edition of 50.000 and widely distributed among the students. Together with his comrades, these Bandung students were sentenced 3 years imprisonment.

The trial of another student, called Beathor, in Jakarta May 1990, brought a further dimension of criticism towards the regime on its East-Timor policy. Beathor went further in his over 300 pages defense-plea, by saying: "What this government has done, is against the international norms. It has brought a black spot in the history of the Indonesian people and, damaged the Indonesian people in the international eyes ..!". What Beathor wanted to say, was clear: it was the right of the East-Timorese people to self-determination and to have their "own" independence; he and many others were not to be blamed for what the government had caused to the East-Timorese people. Beathor, a student leader who was arrested for having been responsible in organising a demonstration in the capital city against price hike in electricity, was sentenced eight and a half years imprisonment.

His defense-plea with a long chapter on East-Timor weighted more than his comrades in Bandung.

Another quality "leap" had also been marked with the formation of a human rights organisation, which called itself "In Fight" (Indonesian Front for the Defense of Human Rights), in the beginning of 1990. This organisation consists of younger and some older activists, a combinations of student generations of the 70-ies and 80-ies and some elements from the generation 1966.

The previous Anti-Gulf war demonstrations spread in some towns, has also been anticipated by the members of In Fight. The "Committe for Peace in the Gulf" then declared a press comunique which says: "What happened in Kuwait, happened also in East-Timor çäand West-Papua". Together with some other demonstrators, the woman activist, who read the press communique were arrested and underwent beatings and interrogations by the security officers. During the interrogation, it was said to the woman activist: "You! We have lost so many lives in East-Timor, we wont be disturbed to loose another one..!"

Sutan Kelana, 6 Mei 1991.
FDI (FRONT DEMOKRASI INDONESIA)
Amsterdam